AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 24, 2004

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 15, 2004

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JANUARY 8, 2004

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2003–04 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL No. 1596

Introduced by Assembly Member Frommer

February 21, 2003

An act to amend Sections 1363.07, *1373.65,* and 1373.96 of the Health and Safety Code, and to amend Sections 10113.8 and 10133.56 of the Insurance Code, relating to health care coverage.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1596, as amended, Frommer. Health benefits.

(1) Existing law provides for the licensure and regulation of health care service plans by the Department of Managed Health Care and for the licensure and regulation of health insurers by the Department of Insurance. Under existing law, these departments are required to prepare comparative benefit matrices comparing specified benefit packages. Existing law requires a health care service plan and a health insurer to make a downloadable copy of these matrices available through their Internet Web sites. Under existing law, a violation of the provisions governing health care service plans is a crime.

This bill would, instead, require a health care service plan and a health insurer to make these matrices available through a link on their Internet Web sites to the sites of the Department of Managed Health Care and the Department of Insurance. Because the bill would impose a different requirement on a health care service plan, the violation of

which would be a crime, it would impose a state-mandated local program.

(2) Under existing law, a health care service plan and a health insurer are required to arrange for the completion of covered services by a terminated or nonparticipating provider to an enrollee and to an insured by a terminated provider, if the enrollee or insured is undergoing a course of treatment for specified conditions, including a terminal illness, as defined. Existing law requires that completion of covered services be provided for the duration of a terminal illness.

This bill would provide that the duration of covered services for a terminal illness may exceed 12 months from the contract termination date or the effective date of coverage for a new enrollee.

The bill would also exclude an enrollee of a health care service plan who is offered an out-of-network option, or who had the option to continue with a health plan or provider and voluntarily chose to change health plans, from these provisions.

(3) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1363.07 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

1363.07. (a) Each health care service plan shall send copies of the comparative benefit matrix prepared pursuant to Section 1363.06 on an annual basis, or more frequently as the matrix is updated by the department and the Department of Insurance, to solicitors and solicitor firms and employers with whom the plan contracts.

(b) Each health care service plan shall require its representatives and solicitors and soliciting firms with which it contracts, to provide a copy of the comparative benefit matrix to individuals when presenting any benefit package for examination or sale.

(c) Each health care service plan that maintains an Internet Web site shall make a downloadable copy of the comparative benefit matrix described in Section 1363.06 available through a link on its site to the Internet Web sites of the department and the Department of Insurance.

SEC. 2. *Section 1373.65 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:*

1373.65. (a) At least 75 days prior to the termination date of its contract with a provider group or a general acute care hospital, the health care service plan shall submit an enrollee block transfer filing to the department that includes the written notice the plan proposes to send to affected enrollees. The plan may not send this notice to enrollees until the department has reviewed and approved its content. If the department does not respond within seven days of the date of its receipt of the filing, the notice shall be deemed approved.

(b) At least 60 days prior to the termination date of a contract between a health care service plan and a provider group or a general acute care hospital, the plan shall send the written notice described in subdivision (a) by United States mail to enrollees who are assigned to the terminated provider group or hospital. A plan that is unable to comply with the timeframe because of exigent circumstances shall apply to the department for a waiver. The plan is excused from complying with this requirement only if its waiver application is granted by the department or the department does not respond within seven days of the date of its receipt of the waiver application. If the terminated provider is a hospital and the plan assigns enrollees to a provider group with exclusive admitting privileges to the hospital, the plan shall send the written notice to each enrollee who is a member of the provider group and who resides within a 15-mile radius of the terminated hospital. If the plan operates as a preferred provider organization or assigns members to a provider group with admitting privileges to hospitals in the same geographic area as the terminated hospital, the plan shall send the written notice to all enrollees who reside within a 15-mile radius of the terminated hospital.

(c) The health care service plan shall send enrollees of a preferred provider organization the written notice required by subdivision (b) only if the terminated provider is a general acute care hospital.

(d) If an individual provider terminates his or her contract or employment with a provider group that contracts with a health care service plan, the plan may require that the provider group send the notice required by subdivision (b).

(e) If, after sending the notice required by subdivision (b), a health care service plan reaches an agreement with a terminated provider to renew or enter into a new contract or to not terminate their contract, the plan shall offer each affected enrollee the option to return to that provider. If an affected enrollee does not exercise this option, the plan shall reassign the enrollee to another provider.

(f) A health care service plan and a provider shall include in all written, printed, or electronic communications sent to an enrollee that concern the contract termination or block transfer, the following statement in not less than eight-point type: ''If you have been receiving care from a health care provider, you may have a right to keep your provider for a designated time period. Please contact your HMO's customer service department, and if you have further questions, you are encouraged to contact the Department of Managed Health Care, which protects HMO consumers, by telephone at its toll-free number, 1-888-HMO-2219, or at a TDD number for the hearing impaired at 1-877-688-9891, or online at ~~www.hmohelp.com~~ *www.hmohelp.ca.gov*.''

(g) For purposes of this section, ''provider group'' means a medical group, independent practice association, or any other similar organization.

SEC. 3. Section 1373.96 of the Health and Safety Code is amended to read:

1373.96. (a) A health care service plan shall at the request of an enrollee, provide the completion of covered services as set forth in this section by a terminated provider or by a nonparticipating provider.

(b) (1) The completion of covered services shall be provided by a terminated provider to an enrollee who at the time of the contract's termination, was receiving services from that provider for one of the conditions described in subdivision (c).

(2) The completion of covered services shall be provided by a nonparticipating provider to a newly covered enrollee who, at the time his or her coverage became effective, was receiving services from that provider for one of the conditions described in subdivision (c).

(c) The health care service plan shall provide for the completion of covered services for the following conditions:

(1) An acute condition. An acute condition is a medical condition that involves a sudden onset of symptoms due to an illness, injury, or other medical problem that requires prompt medical attention and that has a limited duration. Completion of covered services shall be provided for the duration of the acute condition.

(2) A serious chronic condition. A serious chronic condition is a medical condition due to a disease, illness, or other medical problem or medical disorder that is serious in nature and that persists without full cure or worsens over an extended period of time or requires ongoing treatment to maintain remission or prevent deterioration. Completion of covered services shall be provided for a period of time necessary to complete a course of treatment and to arrange for a safe transfer to another provider, as determined by the health care service plan in consultation with the enrollee and the terminated provider or nonparticipating provider and consistent with good professional practice. Completion of covered services under this paragraph shall not exceed 12 months from the contract termination date or 12 months from the effective date of coverage for a newly covered enrollee.

(3) A pregnancy. A pregnancy is the three trimesters of pregnancy and the immediate postpartum period. Completion of covered services shall be provided for the duration of the pregnancy.

(4) A terminal illness. A terminal illness is an incurable or irreversible condition that has a high probability of causing death within one year or less. Completion of covered services shall be provided for the duration of a terminal illness, which may exceed 12 months from the contract termination date or 12 months from the effective date of coverage for a new enrollee.

(5) The care of a newborn child between birth and age 36 months. Completion of covered services under this paragraph shall not exceed 12 months from the contract termination date or 12 months from the effective date of coverage for a newly covered enrollee.

(6) Performance of a surgery or other procedure that is authorized by the plan as part of a documented course of treatment and has been recommended and documented by the provider to

occur within 180 days of the contract's termination date or within 180 days of the effective date of coverage for a newly covered enrollee.

(d) (1) The plan may require the terminated provider whose services are continued beyond the contract termination date pursuant to this section to agree in writing to be subject to the same contractual terms and conditions that were imposed upon the provider prior to termination, including, but not limited to, credentialing, hospital privileging, utilization review, peer review, and quality assurance requirements. If the terminated provider does not agree to comply or does not comply with these contractual terms and conditions, the plan is not required to continue the provider's services beyond the contract termination date.

(2) Unless otherwise agreed by the terminated provider and the plan or by the individual provider and the provider group, the services rendered pursuant to this section shall be compensated at rates and methods of payment similar to those used by the plan or the provider group for currently contracting providers providing similar services who are not capitated and who are practicing in the same or a similar geographic area as the terminated provider. Neither the plan nor the provider group is required to continue the services of a terminated provider if the provider does not accept the payment rates provided for in this paragraph.

(e) (1) The plan may require a nonparticipating provider whose services are continued pursuant to this section for a newly covered enrollee to agree in writing to be subject to the same contractual terms and conditions that are imposed upon currently contracting providers providing similar services who are not capitated and who are practicing in the same or a similar geographic area as the nonparticipating provider, including, but not limited to, credentialing, hospital privileging, utilization review, peer review, and quality assurance requirements. If the nonparticipating provider does not agree to comply or does not comply with these contractual terms and conditions, the plan is not required to continue the provider's services.

(2) Unless otherwise agreed upon by the nonparticipating provider and the plan or by the nonparticipating provider and the provider group, the services rendered pursuant to this section shall be compensated at rates and methods of payment similar to those used by the plan or the provider group for currently contracting

providers providing similar services who are not capitated and who are practicing in the same or a similar geographic area as the nonparticipating provider. Neither the plan nor the provider group is required to continue the services of a nonparticipating provider if the provider does not accept the payment rates provided for in this paragraph.

(f) The amount of, and the requirement for payment of, copayments, deductibles, or other cost sharing components during the period of completion of covered services with a terminated provider or a nonparticipating provider are the same as would be paid by the enrollee if receiving care from a provider currently contracting with or employed by the plan.

(g) If a plan delegates the responsibility of complying with this section to a provider group, the plan shall ensure that the requirements of this section are met.

(h) This section shall not require a plan to provide for completion of covered services by a provider whose contract with the plan or provider group has been terminated or not renewed for reasons relating to a medical disciplinary cause or reason, as defined in paragraph (6) of subdivision (a) of Section 805 of the Business and Profession Code, or fraud or other criminal activity.

(i) This section shall not require a plan to cover services or provide benefits that are not otherwise covered under the terms and conditions of the plan contract. This section shall not apply to a newly covered enrollee covered under an individual subscriber agreement who is undergoing a course of treatment on the effective date of his or her coverage for a condition described in subdivision (c).

(j) *This section shall not apply to an enrollee who is offered an out-of-network option or to an enrollee who had the option to continue with his or her previous health plan or provider and instead voluntarily chose to change health plans.*

(k) The provisions contained in this section are in addition to any other responsibilities of a health care service plan to provide continuity of care pursuant to this chapter. Nothing in this section shall preclude a plan from providing continuity of care beyond the requirements of this section.

~~(k)~~

(l) The following definitions apply for the purposes of this section:

(1) ‘‘Individual provider’’ means a person who is a licentiate, as defined in Section 805 of the Business and Professions Code, or a person licensed under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 1000) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code.

(2) ‘‘Nonparticipating provider’’ means a provider who is not contracted with a health care service plan.

(3) ‘‘Provider’’ shall have the same meaning as set forth in subdivision (i) of Section 1345.

(4) ‘‘Provider group’’ means a medical group, independent practice association, or any other similar organization.

~~SEC. 3.~~

SEC. 4. Section 10113.8 of the Insurance Code is amended to read:

10113.8. (a) Each health insurer that maintains an Internet Web site shall make a downloadable copy of the comparative benefit matrix prepared pursuant to Section 10127.14 available through a link on its site to the Internet Web sites of the department and the Department of Managed Health Care.

(b) Each health insurer shall send copies of the comparative benefit matrix on an annual basis, or more frequently as the matrix is updated by the department and the Department of Managed Health Care, to solicitors and solicitor firms and employers with whom it contracts. Each health insurer shall require its representatives and the solicitors and soliciting firms with which it contracts, to provide a copy of the comparative benefit matrix to individuals when presenting any benefit package for examination or sale.

(c) This section shall not apply to accident-only, specified disease, hospital indemnity, CHAMPUS supplement, long-term care, Medicare supplement, dental-only, or vision-only insurance policies.

~~SEC. 4.~~

SEC. 5. Section 10133.56 of the Insurance Code is amended to read:

10133.56. (a) A health insurer that enters into a contract with a professional or institutional provider to provide services at alternative rates of payment pursuant to Section 10133 shall, at the request of an insured, arrange for the completion of covered services by a terminated provider, if the insured is undergoing a course of treatment for any of the following conditions:

(1) An acute condition. An acute condition is a medical condition that involves a sudden onset of symptoms due to an illness, injury, or other medical problem that requires prompt medical attention and that has a limited duration. Completion of covered services shall be provided for the duration of the acute condition.

(2) A serious chronic condition. A serious chronic condition is a medical condition due to a disease, illness, or other medical problem or medical disorder that is serious in nature and that persists without full cure or worsens over an extended period of time or requires ongoing treatment to maintain remission or prevent deterioration. Completion of covered services shall be provided for a period of time necessary to complete a course of treatment and to arrange for a safe transfer to another provider, as determined by the health insurer in consultation with the insured and the terminated provider and consistent with good professional practice. Completion of covered services under this paragraph shall not exceed 12 months from the contract termination date.

(3) A pregnancy. A pregnancy is the three trimesters of pregnancy and the immediate postpartum period. Completion of covered services shall be provided for the duration of the pregnancy.

(4) A terminal illness. A terminal illness is an incurable or irreversible condition that has a high probability of causing death within one year or less. Completion of covered services shall be provided for the duration of a terminal illness, which may exceed 12 months from the contract termination date.

(5) The care of a newborn child between birth and age 36 months. Completion of covered services under this paragraph shall not exceed 12 months from the contract termination date.

(6) Performance of a surgery or other procedure that has been recommended and documented by the provider to occur within 180 days of the contract's termination date.

(b) The insurer may require the terminated provider whose services are continued beyond the contract termination date pursuant to this section, to agree in writing to be subject to the same contractual terms and conditions that were imposed upon the provider prior to termination, including, but not limited to, credentialing, hospital privileging, utilization review, peer review, and quality assurance requirements. If the terminated provider

does not agree to comply or does not comply with these contractual terms and conditions, the insurer is not required to continue the provider's services beyond the contract termination date.

(c) Unless otherwise agreed upon between the terminated provider and the insurer or between the terminated provider and the provider group, the agreement shall be construed to require a rate and method of payment to the terminated provider, for the services rendered pursuant to this section, that are the same as the rate and method of payment for the same services while under contract with the insurer and at the time of termination. The provider shall accept the reimbursement as payment in full and shall not bill the insured for any amount in excess of the reimbursement rate, with the exception of copayments and deductibles pursuant to subdivision (e).

(d) Notice as to the process by which an insured may request completion of covered services pursuant to this section shall be provided in any insurer evidence of coverage and disclosure form issued after March 31, 2004. An insurer shall provide a written copy of this information to its contracting providers and provider groups. An insurer shall also provide a copy to its insureds upon request.

(e) The payment of copayments, deductibles, or other cost sharing components by the insured during the period of completion of covered services with a terminated provider shall be the same copayments, deductibles, or other cost sharing components that would be paid by the insured when receiving care from a provider currently contracting with the insurer.

(f) If an insurer delegates the responsibility of complying with this section to its contracting entities, the insurer shall ensure that the requirements of this section are met.

(g) For the purposes of this section:

(1) ''Provider'' means a person who is a licentiate as defined in Section 805 of the Business and Professions Code or a person licensed under Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 1000) of Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code.

(2) ''Terminated provider'' means a provider whose contract to provide services to insureds is terminated or not renewed by the insurer or one of the insurer's contracting provider groups. A terminated provider is not a provider who voluntarily leaves the insurer or contracting provider group.

(3) ‘‘Provider group’’ includes a medical group, independent practice association, or any other similar organization.

(h) This section shall not require an insurer or provider group to provide for the completion of covered services by a provider whose contract with the insurer or provider group has been terminated or not renewed for reasons relating to medical disciplinary cause or reason, as defined in paragraph (6) of subdivision (a) of Section 805 of the Business and Professions Code, or fraud or other criminal activity.

(i) This section shall not require an insurer to cover services or provide benefits that are not otherwise covered under the terms and conditions of the insurer contract.

(j) The provisions contained in this section are in addition to any other responsibilities of insurers to provide continuity of care pursuant to this chapter. Nothing in this section shall preclude an insurer from providing continuity of care beyond the requirements of this section.

~~SEC. 5.~~

SEC. 6. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

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